

-8-

REMARKS

Claims 1-21, 23-31, 33-44, and 46 are pending in the application. All claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on U.S. 6,097,352 to Zavracky et al.

As a basis for the rejections, the Office Action asserts that Zavracky has an earlier effective filing date. The Applicants disagree and traverse the rejections.

The present application claims priority to Application No. 08/216,817 (U.S. 5,642,129) filed on March 23, 1994. More specifically, the application's disclosure is identical (by way of continuations) to Application No. 08/410,124 (U.S. 5,673,059) filed on March 23, 1995.

Similarly, Zavracky also claims priority to the '817 application ('129 Patent) filed on March 23, 1994. And Zavracky's disclosure is identical (by way of continuations) to Application No. 08/459,321 (abandoned) filed on March 23, 1995.

Both the present application and Zavracky have the exact same priority dates. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) should therefore be withdrawn.

Reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested.

-9-

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By 
Rodney D. Johnson
Registration No. 36,558
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

Dated: May 17, 2004